The Protocols of the Elders of Zion

An authentic document in Palestinian Authority ideology

By Itamar Marcus and Barbara Crook*

Are the Jewish Elders of Zion conspiring to subjugate the entire world under a Jewish world government? It sounds too ridiculous to consider, let alone necessitate a denial. But if you were a 10th-grade student in the Palestinian Authority (PA), that is precisely what you would have been learning in your new history book. The schoolbook, published in 2004, by the Palestinian Ministry of Education, teaches that among the foundations of Zionism, agreed upon at the First Zionist Congress in 1897, "there is a group of confidential resolutions adopted by the Congress and known by the name 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' the goal of which was world domination."[1]

It has been 100 years since the publication of the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and nearly a century since Henry Ford published his apology for arguing that the *Protocols* were authentic documentation of a Jewish conspiracy. It's been decades since the enlightened world has relegated the *Protocols* to the shelves of hate propaganda, along with the blood libels and poisoned well accusations of the Middle Ages. Why, then, would the PA resurrect this vicious libel in the 21st century and pass it off as authentic to its children?

The striking truth is that this depiction of Jews as conspiring against the world as a kind of conspiracy theory never went out of favor and has been actively espoused in PA society, whose political, religious and educational leaders have incorporated the *Protocols* – and the hate ideology it represents – as basic components of their world view.

This is not merely one among the many PA libels against Jews. The *Protocols* libel is critical for Palestinian society, especially while teaching children that it represents the First Zionist Congress, because it backs up the global ideology of delegitimization of Jews, Israel and especially of Zionism, which is the foundation of Palestinian Authority propaganda.

Defining the Zionist movement as one aspect of a global Jewish plot towards world domination leads to three important conclusions:
1- Zionism is inherently an illegitimate and sinister movement.

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[1] History of the Modern and Contemporary World, Grade 10 p. 60-61. After world outcry, a later edition of the book removed this reference.

2- Zionism is dangerous and threatening not merely to Arabs, but to the entire world.
3- Fighting Zionism is for Arabs and the world an act of self-defense and a service to all humanity.

As such, references to the *Protocols* appear regularly in the PA media, presented as authentic by academics, educators, political leaders and journalists.

A dominant preoccupation of PA academia is the repeated and varied denials of Israel's historical right to exist. These denials entail the erasure of Jewish history in the land, the creation of a Palestinian Islamic history in the land, and finally a motivation for Zionism to be established – other than its being an authentic national renaissance movement. Thus, a history is invented in which the Land of Israel has always been Arab Islamic "Palestine" with no Jewish roots, and Palestinian historians created reasons to explain Zionism's occurrence. The essential narrative created by Arab and Palestinian educators teaches that Zionism in Israel was a European idea with two goals:

1- To set up a bridgehead for European imperialism to control the Middle East;
2- Self defense for Christian Europe designed to be rid of the danger and burden of having Jews living among them.

The *Protocols* libel fits nicely into this, as can be seen in the following discussion by senior PA historians:

> Dr. Issam Sissalem, history lecturer at Islamic University and Educational TV host: "The Jews lived in isolated areas, in ghettos in Poland and in Russia. They were the remains of the Khazars ... with no connection to our land... At that time, Britain wanted to plant a cancer [in the Middle East to control it]. It did not occur to them [the Jews] that Palestine would be theirs. They wanted ... any Homeland. Our people wisely sensed this, as they planted on the land and lived in peace and security, continuing a twelve thousand year journey on this land…
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> Sissalem: "Britain wanted to plant here the Jews in order to protect the Suez Canal… Britain decided to plant in this land a foreign secluded entity - a cancer - in order to drive a wedge in the [Arab] nation…
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> Riad Al-Astal, history lecturer at Al-Azhar University in Gaza:
> "There are two major elements for which Britain and the other European states were striving: the first element was to get rid of the Jews, who were known as those who provoke civil wars, disturbances, and financial crises in Germany, in France and in other European states… second: the European plan, … to torpedo any hope for an Arab unity".

> "In these circumstances [of European nationalism] developed what is known as the Zionist Renaissance, and the seeds of what is called *The Protocols of The Elders of Zion* appeared at the end of the 18th century. They are the *Protocols* that were presented in the Basel Congress in Switzerland [the First Zionist Congress in 1897]."[2]

Once established as factual, the *Protocols* are cited by historians as textual proof of the necessity of fighting Israel. One example:

> Dr. Attallah Abu Al-Farah:
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> "Can there be, in practice, co-existence on Palestinian land between ourselves and the Jews, in light of their mentality which stems from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion?"*
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> Dr. Issam Sissalem, history professor and host: "This question comes from 'My Beloved Friend'. I say: Dr. Attallah, who is a learned expert…"[3]

This conversation was important for numerous reasons. The date was May 14, 1999, eve of Israel's Independence Day, and the purpose of the program was to reject Israel's right to exist. Citing the *Protocols* as authentic confirms the illegitimacy of Israel. Also note that this was said in 1999 - before the PA terror war (also called "Intifada ") was launched. Some suggest that the hatred expressed on PA TV was a result of the war but in fact the opposite is true: The hate promotion is not a result of the war, but preceded it by many years, and was in all likelihood a major cause of the war.

Finally, note the political implications expressed by the professor:

"Can there be co-existence on Palestinian land between ourselves and the Jews, in light of their mentality which stems from *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion?"*

The *Protocols* is being used as an excuse for fighting Israel, as there can be no peace with a movement which is evil in essence.

Seeing the *Protocols* as a guide to understanding Jewish behavior encourages the PA to demonize virtually every Israeli policy – even those that are manifestly positive. When Israel released 400 Palestinian prisoners in 2004 in exchange for a kidnapped businessman and the bodies of three Israeli soldiers, the PA found the following *Protocols*-spin to demonize the release:

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[2] Palestinian Authority TV, December 28, 2003
[3] Palestinian Authority TV, May 14, 1999

> "We see that Israel is trying to delude the world that one Israeli will be exchanged for 1,000 Palestinians," explained Ahmad Nasser, secretary of the Palestinian Legislative Council. "Israel is interested in planting among the Palestinians, the Arabs or the world the concept of value – the value of a Jew and the value of an Arab."

The interviewer concurred:

> "This concept appears in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, that they [Jews] are superior and the rest are inferior."[4]

Note that the *Protocols* is so deeply incorporated in PA mentality that the journalist cites it quite routinely.

In order to make the *Protocols* seem real it has to be specific, and the PA goes from the general to the specific and at times it is cited – chapter and verse. One interesting example: The official PA daily in its "Political-National Education" page, cited precise quotes from Protocols 2 and 12 to explain Israeli policy:

> "Moral and psychological manipulation has a significant place in the minds of Jews, and formed a very important source of strength in the Hebrew State…
> "Disinformation has been one of the bases of psychological manipulation among the Israelis, and propaganda played an important role in the psychological prodding of world political leaders to support Zionism…
> "*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* did not ignore the importance of using propaganda to promote the Zionist goals. In the second protocol it is written: 'Through the newspapers we will have the means to propel and to influence.' In the twelfth protocol: 'Our governments will hold the reins of most of the newspapers, and through this plan we will possess the primary power to turn to public opinion.'"[5]

The PA media have depicted the *Protocols* as an active guidebook, almost as if Israeli leaders are flipping through the pages at cabinet meetings and basing policy on what they discover. Note the following two examples:

> "The purpose of the military policy is to impose this situation on the residents and force them to leave their homes, and this is done in the framework of the Protocols of Zion..."[6]
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> <u>"Remember the history, oh Arabs!</u>
> "1. In 1897 the first Zionist Congress was held in Basel...
> "2. In 1907 the actual immigration operation began...

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[4] Palestinian Authority TV, Feb. 6, 2004
[5] *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, January 25, 2001
[6] *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, November 18, 2001

"3. In 1917 the woeful declaration of Balfour was made...
"9. In 1977 the visit which shocked the Arab Nation occurred, the President of Egypt visited Israel...
"Every ten years, a vital aim is achieved. These are the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, of a century, from 1897 till 1997. They have planned and accomplished. Every ten years, another aim was achieved, proving their continuity and their power."[7]

Everything cited until this point is from Fatah political leaders on PA Fatah-controlled TV and newspapers. The Hamas movement agrees with this ideology and even formalizes it by incorporating the *Protocols* into its ideology and citing it in the official Hamas charter:

Article Thirty Two
"...Hamas is calling upon the Arab and Islamic peoples to act seriously and tirelessly in order to frustrate that dreadful scheme ... Today it is Palestine and tomorrow it may be another country or other countries. For Zionist scheming has no end, and after Palestine they will covet expansion from the Nile to the Euphrates... Their scheme has been laid out in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion,* and their present [conduct] is the best proof of what is said there."

In order to present the *Protocols* libel as authentic Jewish ideology, the PA educators teach that careful observation of Jewish history shows earlier signs and indications of this libel. Thus they teach that the *Protocols*, while a relatively new Zionist document, is not a new Jewish ideology, but a continuation of the pattern of Jewish thinking and behavior throughout history. According to this view, the *Protocols* is only the apex – the peak of Jewish development.

Here is one example:

Sheikh Attiyeh Sahar, Chairman of the Department of Islamic Research in The Al-Zahar University:
"It must be known that this nation, the Jews, are willing of mind soul to alter their religion in order to attain their demands. This is rooted deep in their history…They alienated the God that saved them and willed to worship idols… These things show us that these people, in order to attain their goals, are willing to turn away from their God...We also know that they changed the Bible and replaced it, because it does not serve their purposes, and they drafted the Talmud, as it is known, and came up, finally, with the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*."[8]

To counter this Jewish threat indicated by the *Protocols*, Palestinian defense bodies undertake "research" to defend against it:

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[7] *Al Quds*, July 10, 2001
[8] Palestinian Authority TV, September 10, 2000

> "The 65th issue of *The Shahids* (Martyrs) was recently published by the Political Guidance of the Border Patrol. The issue includes many important political, economic and military matters… In addition, there is a chapter about a research paper, entitled 'The Jewish Danger: *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.'"[9]

This *Protocols* libel is not limited to the written and spoken word. Palestinian political cartoons reflect the *Protocols* libel of Jews, even when the *Protocols* is not explicitly cited. Some examples:

1- The Jews endanger the world:

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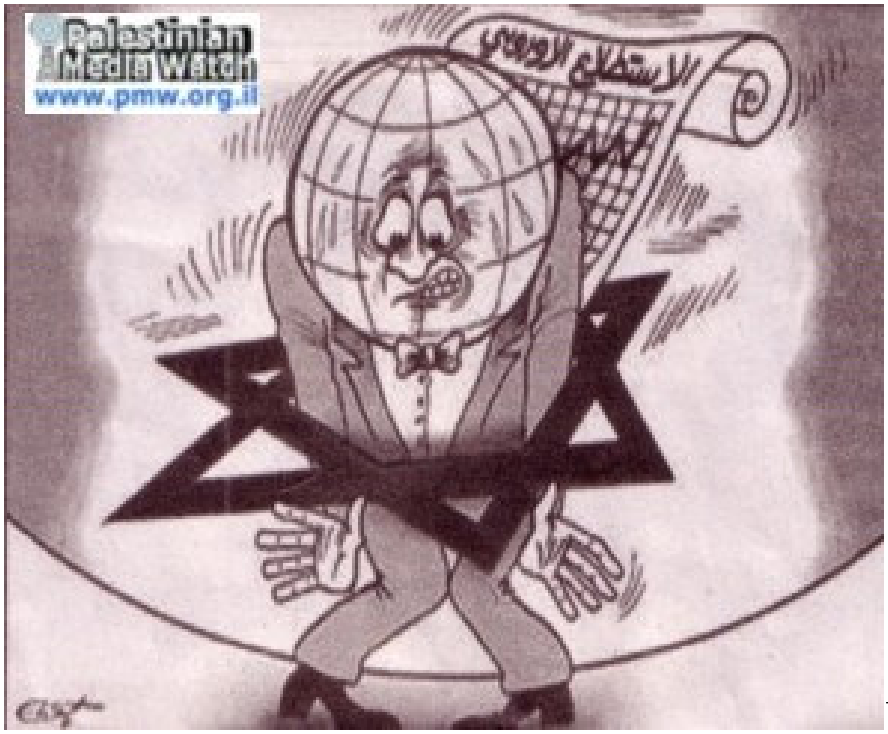
[9] *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, December 1, 2003
[10] *Al Hayat Al Jadida*, May 5, 2005

[11]



[12]

[11] *Al Hayat Al Jadida*, May 14, 2005

[12] *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, November 9, 2003

2- Jews control and dictate policy of world leaders and governments

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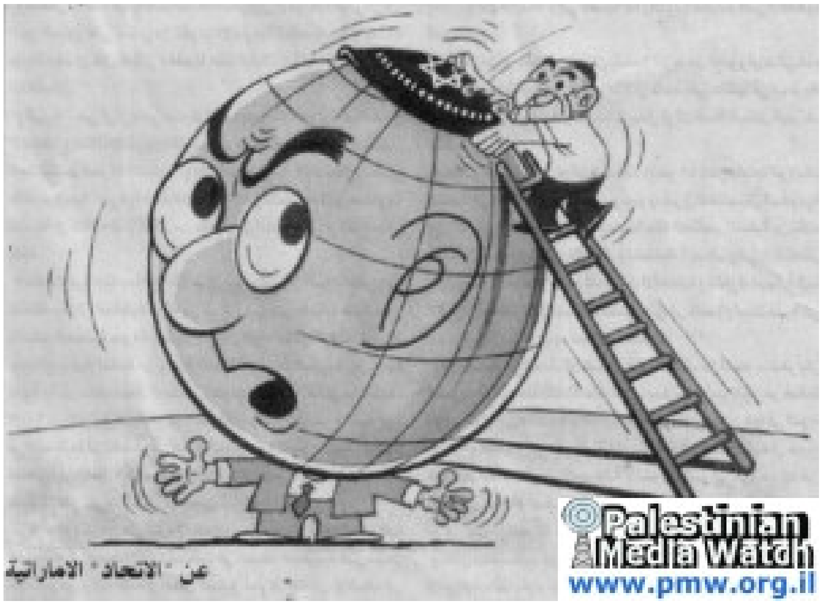
[13] *Al Hayat Al Jadida*, May 8, 2005

3- The Jew's goal is world domination



[15]

In conclusion, in spite of universal acceptance of the *Protocols* as an anti-Semitic forgery, the representation of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* as an authentic book representing a true Jewish conspiracy is part of Palestinian Authority ideology. The PA is using this libel the same way it was used by anti-Semites in the last century: Once it was documented by an "authentic" book that the Jews were part of an international conspiracy to dominate, control and conquer the world, then fighting them, persecuting them or even killing them could be presented as legitimate self defense.

The *Protocols* for the Palestinians serve the same purpose as the blood libels and the myths of the poisoned wells: If the Jews are scheming to kill others, then fighting them is legitimate self-defense and even admirable.

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[14] *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, February 24, 2005
[15] Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, July 4, 2005

The Palestinian Authority successfully used the *Protocols* libel, together with other hate propaganda, to transform the killing of Jews from immoral murder into legitimate self-defense, and even the service of humanity. The overwhelming Palestinian popular support for the suicide terror war against Israeli civilians, and the transformation of the murderers of Jews into Palestinian heroes and role models for children, can be seen as proof of the complete success for the Palestinian Authority policy of demonizing Jews and Israelis. This revival of the *Protocols* libel was for the Palestinian Authority an important component, as it gave academic support and "authentic" authorization to the intrinsically evil depiction of Jews and Israelis that was so important to the PA, and it made for Palestinians fighting and killing Jews a natural response.

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